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Draft country programme document**

Liberia

Summary

The Executive Director presents the draft country programme document for Liberia for discussion and comments. The Executive Board is requested to approve the aggregate indicative budget of $2,826,000 from regular resources, subject to the availability of funds, and $5,820,000 in other resources, subject to the availability of specific purpose contributions, for 2006.

* E/ICEF/2005/7.

** In accordance with Executive Board decision 2002/4 (E/ICEF/2002/8), the present document will be revised and posted on the UNICEF website in October 2005, together with the summary results matrix. It will then be approved by the Executive Board at its first regular session of 2006.

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*Basic data** *(2003 unless otherwise stated)*	
Child population (millions, under 18 years)	1.8
U5MR (per 1,000 live births)	235
Underweight (%, moderate and severe, 1999/2000)	26
Maternal mortality ratio (per 100,000 live births, 1987/1988)	580
Primary school enrolment (% net, male/female, 1999/2000)	79/61
Primary school children reaching grade 5 (%, 1998)	33
Use of improved drinking water sources (%, 2002)	62
Adult HIV prevalence rate (%, end-2003)	8.2
Child work (%, children 5-14 years old)	..
GNI per capita (US$)	130
One-year-olds immunized against DPT3 (%)	38
One-year-olds immunized against measles (%)	53

* More comprehensive country data on children and women are available at www.unicef.org.

The situation of children and women

1. Children and women in Liberia live very precarious lives. Liberia has some of the highest mortality rates in the world: with infant mortality at 157 per 1,000 live births, under-five mortality at 235 per 1,000 live births and maternal mortality at 580 per 100,000 live births.

2. Security was established throughout the country in the middle of 2004. Disarmament and demobilization of the fighting forces (103,000 people) was completed by the end of the year, but the reintegration package for over 40 per cent of the demobilized is still unfunded. This poses a significant threat to national security. State authority, law and order are not yet fully established throughout the country. Because of the transitional nature of the Government and limited state funding, government-run basic services have not been re-established. Poor access is compounded by very poor roads and limited public transport.

3. Some 260,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) living in camps and 300,000 refugees have begun to return home but the process is slow and there is concern over adequate access to social services, shelter and food security in the areas of return.

4. Malnutrition is widespread, with 39 per cent of children younger than five years of age stunted and 26 per cent underweight. The rate of iron deficiency among children aged 6-35 months is 87 per cent, with rates of 58 per cent for non-pregnant women and 62 per cent for pregnant women. Life expectancy dropped from 47 years in 2000 to 41 years in 2002. The common childhood illnesses are malaria (42 per cent), diarrhoea (21 per cent) and acute respiratory infections (12 per cent). Currently, 45 per cent (132) of the pre-war primary health facilities are functional, but as they are being funded through emergency funds, they have no medium- or long-term sustainability. The cold-chain system is now being rebuilt. Vaccine stores have been established in the country's 15 counties but they require improvement.

Currently, 106 health facilities are offering routine expanded programme on immunization (EPI) services. The estimated coverage rates are 63 per cent for anti-tuberculosis vaccine (BCG); 32 per cent for measles vaccine; 23 per cent for yellow fever; 21 per cent for three doses of combined diphtheria/pertussis/tetanus vaccine (DPT3); and 26 per cent for three doses of oral polio vaccine.

5. Access to quality education is a major concern. The high figures for operational schools and enrolment mask the critical problem of quality. There are a number of significant challenges including little or no supervision or quality control, the poor learning environment, lack of teaching and learning materials, overcrowded classes, a high percentage of over-aged students, inadequate numbers of school facilities and the inability of many households to pay schools fees or charges, even in public schools. Generally the teachers are not well qualified, with 41 per cent below the level of high-school graduation. Salary payments are erratic and paid centrally, and teachers are often not in school. As a consequence of the war, an estimated 500,000 children have had some significant interruption in their education and are now too old for their grade. These children will require a different form of schooling such as the Accelerated Learning Programme (ALP).

6. A total of 11,780 children associated with the fighting forces have been demobilized and only 42 remain to be reunited with their families. The current priority is to support their social reintegration mainly through community-based systems for child protection, access to education and skills training. Reports indicate a very high level of vulnerability to sexual exploitation and abuse and as yet, no legal or social protection services are operational.

7. The prevalence of HIV is increasing, currently affecting an estimated 8.2 per cent of the population aged 15-49 years, up from 5.6 per cent in 1999. In the absence of comprehensive and reliable data, these statistics probably represent an underestimation of HIV prevalence in the country, which experiences all the major factors conducive to high incident rates.

8. In 2004, UNICEF conducted assessments of the water and sanitation situation in 13 of the 15 counties. The rate of access to safe water sources is estimated at 24 per cent, which falls to 15 per cent when their functionality is considered, and the rate of access to safe sanitation is an alarming 5 per cent.

9. The country's economic infrastructure is recovering only very slowly from 14 years of civil conflict and neglect, and international investment is scare and hesitant. The unemployment rate is estimated to be 85 per cent.

10. Despite its limited resources, the National Transitional Government of Liberia, which was established on 17 August 2003 by the Comprehensive Peace Accord in Accra, Ghana and inaugurated in October 2003, has supported efforts by United Nations agencies and non-governmental organization (NGO) partners to improve the situation of the children and women in Liberia.

Key results and lessons learned from previous cooperation, 2003-2005

Key results achieved

11. The political, security and humanitarian situation has been very unstable during the last three years; 2003 saw the height of the fighting and the resulting humanitarian crisis. The country programme responded to the changing situation with a focus on delivery of basic services and child protection.

12. In health and nutrition, using immunization as the vanguard, the programme played a significant role in the restoration of primary health-care (PHC) facilities. The programme supported the reopening of 20 per cent of the currently functioning health facilities and enabled 80 per cent to provide routine EPI services in all districts. The cold chain has been re-established and cold stores are operational throughout the country. In collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO), the programme supported three major campaigns which saw 300,000 people vaccinated against yellow fever, 986,000 children vaccinated against polio and 1.5 million children vaccinated against measles. There have been no reported cases of polio for three years, although the surveillance system is not very robust. Despite the fact that there are considerable improvements to be made in access to and quality of services, the reported figures show an increase in coverage with, for example, BCG rising from 48 to 61 per cent.

13. The school system that had collapsed was quickly resuscitated by the Back to School programme. Some 800,000 children were provided with school supplies through more than 2,500 schools. Over 13,000 teachers underwent reorientation training, which was strengthened with the training of 1,500 teachers to C Certificate level and gradual capacity-building of the supervisory system. In collaboration with the Ministry of Education, UNICEF is leading the development of ALP for children whose education has been interrupted. ALP has proven to be very popular and 95 schools, with an enrolment of 10,500 students, started during the first six months of the programme. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has incorporated ALP into its programme and the combined increase in enrolment is expected to be three times the current figure by the end of 2005.

14. The child protection programme has been deeply involved in the disarmament and demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration process. UNICEF was given the leadership role for the children's component within this process by the National Commission for Disarmament, Demobilization, Reintegration and Rehabilitation (NCDDRR). The programme successfully played a national coordinating role by bringing together all the actors in the area of child protection and establishing guidelines and standards. In total, 11,780 children, of whom 2,738 are girls, were demobilized and all but 42 have been reunited with their families. Having established the methodology and guidelines for social reintegration (mainly education and skills training), implementation remains a significant challenge. A start has been made to revitalize the juvenile justice system. To date, in collaboration with the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), nearly 500 police officers have received orientation and a police protection system for women and children is now being established, and will be strengthened in 2006.

15. The water and sanitation programme has focused on providing services to one fourth of the 20 IDP camps. It also supported the Back to School programme, meeting nearly 50 per cent of the 2005 target of equipping 1,100 schools with safe water points and hygienic sanitation (i.e., about 30 per cent of the total number of schools in the country).

16. UNICEF plays a leading role in the development of coordination and implementation guidelines in the four programme areas of water and sanitation, health and nutrition, education and child protection. Coordination has been better either where UNICEF has provided funding or technical expertise and innovations, e.g., child protection in the disarmament and demobilization process or ALP.

Lessons learned

17. The child protection programme for disarmament and demobilization, which has been used now in Liberia and Sierra Leone, has proven to be effective, having assisted nearly 12,000 and 8,000 children respectively. With its institutional experience and channelling of funds to child protection partners, UNICEF was in a position to coordinate implementation, set standards and negotiate with UNMIL and NCDDRR on behalf of all partners. The practices of interim care and family tracing and reunification are valid. The established standard family tracing methodologies are now being applied to cross-border situations through close inter-agency collaboration with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). However, the experience has underlined the need to strengthen the process of the initial identification of a child, the criteria for access and clearer elaboration of the Cape Town Principles on the Prevention of Recruitment of Children into the Armed Forces and Demobilization and Social Reintegration of Children in Africa. It is important to clarify the design of a demobilization programme that separates the process for children from the one for adults. The payment of the Transitional Support Allowance to children has many implications and requires further discussion and decisions prior to its being replicated in other countries.

18. The ALP is very popular because it enables children to catch up their lost school years, does not have any school fees or associated costs and is attractive to over-age children. However, the non-payment of teachers is a serious concern, threatening the overall success of the programme. Either the teachers are teaching ALP in addition to their regular classes or they are not on the payroll of the Ministry of Education. All agencies supporting ALP must be prepared to maintain support for the full five-year cycle of three intakes and include support for the salaries of ALP teachers. Without such commitment, ALP will be very limited and could collapse in the early stages. However, ALP can only be a short-term programme and is no substitute for the regular school system.

The country programme, 2006

Summary budget table

(In thousands of United States dollars)

Programme	*Regular resources*	*Other resources*	*Total*
Education	500	1 250	1 750
Child protection	500	800	1 300
Health and nutrition	500	2 000	2 500
Water, sanitation and hygiene	526	800	1 326
External relations and information	200		200
Cross-sectoral costs	600	970	1 570
Total*	**2 826**	**5 820**	**8 646**

* It is expected that an additional $8,000,000 will be raised through an integrated Humanitarian Appeal in 2006.

Preparation process

19. The current short-term emergency programme had to be revised when the dramatic political and security situation engulfed the country. The revision was formalized in the mid-term review undertaken in mid-2004. The comprehensive mid-term review changed the programme's paradigm and focus and brought it in line with the post-conflict national planning framework, the Results-Focused Transitional Framework (RFTF). The members of the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) and the Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs began joint planning with a review meeting, at which it was observed that the current political and security situation remains very volatile and unpredictable. Because the Transitional Government will be replaced at the end of the year following national elections, the RFTF will continue to be the short-term planning framework agreed by the Government and donors. Consequently, it was jointly agreed that there will be a one-year programme for 2006, to enable the UNDG agencies to harmonize their programme cycles and jointly plan a long-term programme with the new Government, within the framework of a revised RFTF. Subsequently, detailed planning was undertaken with line ministries and partner NGOs and plans considered within the RFTF, and with reference to the UNICEF Core Commitments for Children in Emergencies. The extensive recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child for immediate action on basic services, police and legal protection and the establishment of monitoring bodies were also incorporated in the programme plan.

Goals, key results and strategies

20. The country programme will contribute to the protection and fulfilment of the rights of children within the priorities set out in the RFTF. The emphasis will be on rebuilding social services and improving critical areas of protection including sexual exploitation and abuse and juvenile justice. The programme will focus on the seven

counties to which the majority of IDPs and refugees are returning, which have also suffered the greatest destruction. The focus counties include Monrovia, the capital city, home to one half of the population and where the majority of demobilized children are expected to reside. Immunization, distribution of school supplies and child protection will have national coverage, although the majority of child protection interventions will take place in the focus counties.

21. Primary education will be a particular focus because of its central role in the reintegration of demobilized ex-child combatants, in child protection and in child development during the country's post-conflict stage. All of the programmes will include school-based interventions so as to collectively support the improvement of education. There will be a continuation of ongoing commitments, including ALP and social reintegration of demobilized children (through education and skills training). In the focus counties, all schools and health facilities will have safe water and sanitation facilities and the water, sanitation and hygiene programme will expand to improve conditions in 500 communities.

22. Given the very unstable political situation within Liberia and in the neighbouring countries, a significant emergency preparedness and response capacity will be maintained. Emergency stocks for 10,000 people for one month will be maintained in-country. The current emphasis is on the border area with Côte d'Ivoire, with preparedness for an influx of refugees and programmes to act as a counter-balance to the recruitment of children as mercenary soldiers.

23. The programme will strengthen county-level supervision and management by the county officers of various line ministries and, in collaboration with United Nations agencies, strengthen county-level coordination and data collection.

24. HIV/AIDS will be addressed in a number of areas, in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), which manages the resources provided by the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. Life-skills education will be introduced to schools, and HIV/AIDS prevention will be undertaken by youth groups who will begin to reach out-of-school youth. This will be supplemented by the development of social workers' and teachers' skills on the information, education and communication (IEC)/behavioural change communication (BCC) strategy developed in 2005. Training on the prevention of sexual exploitation in schools will include a component on HIV/AIDS. In collaboration with UNMIL, the programme will extend the system of reporting sexual exploitation nationwide, with an emphasis on the main return areas for IDPs and refugees, through county-level committees to prevent sexual exploitation. In addition, the investigation process will be improved in the light of experience and new investigators will be trained to properly investigate cases of sexual abuse of children.

Relationship to national priorities and the UNDAF

25. The Common Country Assessment and United Nations Development Assistance Framework were drafted in 2002-2003, but were not completed and are now outdated. Following the signing of a peace agreement, the installation of the transitional government and a comprehensive needs assessment, the RFTF, which outlines the priorities in all sectors, was developed and endorsed by the Government, donors and NGOs. The Integrated RFTF Humanitarian Appeal was

developed in late 2004. Because the World Bank has found that that the country is not yet suitable for the development of a poverty reduction strategy, the RFTF will be the national planning framework for at least the next 12 months. The programmes of the UNDG agencies are based within the RFTF, and the UNICEF programme within three of its clusters: basic social services; disarmament, demobilization and reintegration; and IDP and refugee return and repatriation. The recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child coincide with many of the priorities of the RFTF. Thus, the proposed country programme is designed to support the rebuilding of basic social services, focusing on areas to which the majority of IDPs and refugees will return. In addition, the programme will focus on children associated with the fighting forces as part of the RFTF plans for disarmament and demobilization of fighting forces.

Relationship to international priorities

26. Two major components of the programme concentrate on the UNICEF priorities of immunization and child protection. Both are extensive programmes which will comprehensively support the redevelopment of these sectors throughout the country. In both cases, UNICEF is seen as the major agency for policy development, technical input and financial support. Girls' education is part of the broader education programme, which provides the basis (access and quality) for girl's education. The principal strategy for girl's education is one of targeted advocacy, the introduction of life skills and the inclusion of 60 per cent females in the new teacher-training programmes. In the context of limited funding, the basic building blocks for comprehensive programme interventions on HIV/AIDS have been carried out: surveys of adolescent behaviour and orphans and vulnerable children, and the development of guidelines to prevent mother-to-child transmission of HIV. The programme will supplement these inputs to support the activities of the Global Fund with such interventions as the IEC/BCC communication strategy, life skills in schools and work with youth groups. It is expected that more opportunities will be created for including a separate adolescent HIV/AIDS programme in the full country programme for 2007-2011.

27. Liberia recently published its first report on the Millennium Development Goals, which highlighted the massive challenges ahead. The programme will contribute to achieving the Goals through improving access to and quality of PHC, primary education, water and sanitation and reversing the incidence of vaccine-preventable diseases. In addition, UNICEF will collaborate with UNDP to ensure that the new Government is aware of and committed to achieving the Goals.

Programme components

28. The **education** programme, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, USAID and NGO partners, will further develop and expand ALP, supporting a cumulative total of 40,000 children. To improve quality and access, the programme will train an additional 500 teachers to C Level certification and support 300 schools to improve educational quality. To support these developments, the Ministry's planning capacities will be enhanced at the national and county levels, with particular emphasis on regular supervision and reporting of teachers. Through these activities, the programme will also promote girls' education by specifically targeting

a 10-per-cent increase in enrolment and 20-per-cent retention rate for girls in 300 schools in the focus counties. As one component of the HIV/AIDS intervention, the education programme will expand the life-skills programme. Teacher training for both formal and ALP schools will include life skills and 600 schools will be specifically targeted to introduce the programme into their regular timetable. In collaboration with the World Food Programme (WFP), the emergency school feeding initiative will continue, with special emphasis on girls' enrolment and retention.

29. The **child protection** programme will continue its commitment to the successful reintegration of demobilized children. In addition, special strategies will target girls by supporting 4,000 girls in school through the Community Education Investment Programme and 5,000 girls with skills training. At the same time, the programme will further develop the system of community-based social reintegration through the establishment of an additional 70 child welfare committees and 70 children's clubs in the focus counties. This will be linked to the follow-up support to 75 per cent of the demobilized children and psychosocial support provided by 400 specially trained teachers. Special emphasis will be given to preventing the re-recruitment of children. In collaboration with ICRC and UNHCR, the programme will support family tracing and reunification for 1,500 children as part of the refugee repatriation process. The police protection units for women and children will be further strengthened and expanded to be operational in five counties. Some 200 police officers of the units will also be trained on juvenile justice and alternatives to detention will be established. In addition, children in 350 schools will learn about protection from sexual exploitation and abuse. This will be linked directly to the life-skills initiative managed by the education programme.

30. To protect children from sexual exploitation by United Nations staff, following the creation of a reporting procedure and skilled investigation teams set up in the last year, groups to prevent sexual exploitation will be set up in the focus counties to promote reporting and ensure that all reports are properly investigated. The future direction of this project will be guided by a study on child prostitution. This will enable the programme to address the two worst forms of child labour — child soldiers and child prostitution. Orphanages will be monitored and assisted to maintain standards. Specialist care for children made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS will be established in the focus counties. The Children's Unit in the Ministry of Gender and Development will be strengthened to monitor implementation of the recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child. The youth groups programme will be expanded progressively, with an additional 25 groups active in life skills and young people's promotion of HIV/AIDS messages.

31. The **health and nutrition** programme will support the expansion of EPI services to a total of 250 health units (an additional 50 with solar refrigeration), strengthening of the cold chain in all counties, and improving the skills of 250 staff so as to reach 70-per-cent coverage for DPT3 and 65 per cent for two doses of tetanus toxoid vaccine. In addition, 90 primary health units (about 30 per cent of the national total) will be supported. In collaboration with WHO, the programme will provide technical support to the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare to implement a plan for the sustainable financing of PHC services. The system of communication for health behavioural change, emphasizing early child development, nutrition, malaria and reproductive health, will be introduced in the catchment communities of the 90 health facilities. In collaboration with the United Nations Population Fund,

the programme will strengthen reproductive health services through supplying materials and training staff in the 90 health units. To support the management of the system, the programme will strengthen the operational capacities of the county health teams in the focus counties and improve data management at the county and national levels. The programme will collaborate with WFP to strengthen a national nutrition monitoring system and ensure that there are common approaches to nutrition issues. UNICEF will continue to work with the Government, WFP and NGO partners on nutritional policies. Supplementary feeding centres will be supported on an as-needed basis. Vitamin and micronutrient supplementation will become a part of routine PHC services and any supplementary immunization campaigns.

32. The **water, sanitation and hygiene** programme will continue to be the lead programme for water and sanitation and as such, support the Government in national and county-level coordination and data management. The establishment of a national programme of community-based pump maintenance will be the major issue for inter-agency collaboration. An additional 400 schools will be provided with safe water and sanitation so that all the schools in the most populous areas of the country will have adequate facilities. Participatory hygiene promotion will be introduced in these schools. Some 500 of the schools' catchment communities will be engaged in improving their own water and sanitation facilities and hygiene promotion.

33. The **external relations and information** programme will create good fund-raising opportunities, keep all donors well informed of programme progress and build the capacity to provide fast and up-to-date information on emergency situations.

34. **Cross-sectoral costs** will be used for activities that would normally be covered by the Government including customs clearance and distribution of supplies, field monitoring, reporting and coordination. In addition, they will be used for operating in accordance with Minimum Operating Security Standards and to supply basic utilities for the office including water supply and electrical generation.

Major partnerships

35. In the current national situation, NGOs are the main implementing partners. UNICEF works with a range of NGOs and plays the main coordinating role in all the sectors, in particular child protection, ALP and water and sanitation. The immunization programme is implemented in collaboration with WHO and the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization, with support from the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The country programme is working with USAID in expansion of the ALP, and with UNMIL in a number of areas, especially child protection. Having collaborated in disarmament and demobilization activities, the partnership will continue with the reintegration programmes, as well as prevention of sexual exploitation, establishing the women and child protection units within the Liberia National Police and the reform of the juvenile justice system. An alliance of partners including UNHCR, ICRC, the International Rescue Committee and Save the Children (United Kingdom) is working on cross-border family tracing and reunification. The programme will continue to work in partnership with UNDP, which is managing the HIV/AIDS resources provided by the Global Fund. UNICEF and WFP are working to develop a national situation

analysis on nutrition and a sustainable monitoring system. Additionally, WFP supports the education sector with emergency school-feeding programmes. In collaboration with the Humanitarian Aid Office of the European Union, the programme is strengthening national coordination of water and sanitation interventions, maintaining standards, expanding the community-based system for hand-pump maintenance and supporting the development and harmonization of cross-border protection systems.

Monitoring, evaluation and programme management

36. Monitoring and data management are of critical importance. The current systems are, at best, weak and unreliable. The programme will benefit from the Humanitarian Information Centre, initially established by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, which can collate and present data. The village mapping that will be completed in 2005 will form the basic framework for the location and recording of basic data on service delivery and gaps in services. It will also form the system for presenting the results of the multiple indicator cluster survey (MICS). With support from UNICEF and UNDP, *DevInfo* will be set up in the Department of Statistics and be used to present all current data to show progress towards the Millennium Development Goals. Data for monitoring the Convention on the Rights of the Child will be collected by the Children's Unit of the Ministry of Gender and Development, with technical support from UNICEF.

37. There will be three tiers of monitoring. The first tier will be the county coordination mechanism, which will provide routine data on a monthly basis. This is the principal information gathering tool for monitoring the RFTF. The second tier is regular field monitoring visits by programme officers, who will verify the reports of the implementing partners. The final tier is composed of the baseline surveys for interventions in nutrition and water and sanitation. The MICS will provide very valuable baseline information. A sentinel site system in selected schools established in 2005 will be continued in 2006 and used to track the enrolment and retention. The Rapid Assessment of Leaning Spaces will be adapted to form part of the Education Management Information System and in so doing be updated. The main surveys will be the MICS, an EPI coverage survey and the update of the Rapid Assessment of Learning Spaces.